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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-5501**

**Statement of**  
**the Hon. Donna M. Christian-Christensen**  
**on H.R. 5010**  
**D.C. and U.S. Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act**  
**Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy**  
**House Banking and Financial Services Committee**  
**September 7, 2000**

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Chairman Bachus, Ranking Member Waters and Members of the Subcommittee, it is indeed a pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to join my colleagues from the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam and Puerto Rico in support of the DC and US Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act.

The journey that we are about to embark on, with this hearing, is one which the five of us here today, have waited for since the original Commemorative Coin Program bill first became law more than two years ago. At the time the 50-State Commemorative Coin Program Act came to the floor of the House in 1997, DC and the Territories were excluded from the bill because the Chairman of this Subcommittee at the time wanted to get the Treasury Department's determination that there wouldn't be a problem including DC and the insular areas in the Commemorative Coin Program.

So after nearly two years, Mr. Chairman, the US Citizens of DC and the Territories are finally about to get the opportunity to have our nation commemorate and celebrate some significant event or fact about our respective homes. This is a great day for all of us as we come together with this bill to celebrate finally, all of America.

While my district, the US Virgin Islands, also known as America's Paradise, has many ecological, historical and cultural treasures which are worthy of commemoration, we also boast of having been the place where the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton grew up and honed the skills which served our then fledgling nation so well.

For the benefit of those who might not know this, the Virgin Islands have been a member of the American family since 1917, when Denmark sold the islands of the former Danish West Indies, St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix to the United States for \$25 million. We are located approximately 1,000 miles southeast of Miami in the Caribbean Sea and are mountainous islands of volcanic origin, with beaches that have consistently ranked among the best in the world. We also boast the only site where members of Christopher Columbus' party are known to have set foot on what is today US soil.

The Salt River National Historical and Ecological Park was established in 1992 to, among other things, commemorate this important historical occurrence.

Today the Virgin Islands is inhabited by people of a variety of races and cultural heritage. Our residents are of many backgrounds – including African, Puerto Rican, American mainland, French, Danish, Scots, Portuguese and Asians. However, English is the primary language spoken throughout the territory.

The people of the Virgin Islands see it as only fitting Mr. Chairman that we along with the residents and citizens of Guam American Samoa, Puerto Rico and DC should also get the opportunity to educate our fellow Americans about our unique qualities as well as promote our pride at being Americans